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Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: **we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous.** Send us your missives, yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion, fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry; we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. **The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it.** Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. **Your submission must include your real name; an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views.** (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an honestly pretty adequate monitor, nowadays. You should come. We don't bite. **You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in the Dining Commons, the post office, or on the door of your mod** (if we get to visiting other dorms anyway).

TO SUBMIT

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu or Rachel Ithen, Box 1413.

Editorial:

List

I, dear readers, am very fond of making lists. In fact, many of my first few submissions to the Omen way back when were comprised of lists. Whenever I travel back home for a break or hop on a bus to Cambridge for the weekend, I make many lists: packing lists, to-do lists, to-buy lists, lists of what homework I need to get done before getting back, etc. In fact, there's a list currently on my desk of what I want to accomplish this summer. I guess this may seem relatively normal to other people who like making lists and/or being organized. But now, for the first time in my history as the Editor of the Omen, I am going to make an Editorial from a list.

to make computers talk to me while I'm doing layout, then your skills will be found very valuable here.

And thus ends my short list of why the Omen needs you, dear reader. Our **LAST LAYOUT OF THE YEAR (!!!)** is taking place on April 26th at 8pm in the Merrill A Basement. You can show up if you've never been to layout before, never submitted before, never spoken to any of us before, etc. We just want to meet you and hang out.

And remember kids, the Omen loves you.

Rachel Ithen

List of reasons why the Omen needs you:

1. Because as of walking into the door of the Omen office slightly after 8pm this evening, there were exactly **TWO** submissions in our e-mail inbox. Thankfully, as the night progressed we received more e-mails (and paper submissions) but that was a bit of a scare.

2. Two out of three of our signers are graduating next year which means that come next October or November or December, we need new folks willing to do layout and sign paperwork and send out e-mails more creative than mine.

3. I can't carry three boxes at once. I can barely carry one. Omens are heavy. Saga is far.

4. If people actually leave the Omen once they graduate (which only happens sometimes), then Fiona is the only one who knows "witchcraft," so if you know how


THE OMEN HAIKU
*views in the Omen
do not necessarily
reflect the staff's views*

Section: Speak

The Ecological Constraints Model and Related Behavioral Adaptations in Non-Human Hominids

Charles Haigh

Abstract:

The ecological constraints model shows that food access is a limit to group size in a number of primate species. I explore the model in the three genera of non-human hominids Pan, Gorilla, and Pongo. High-volume, high-quality food requirements in orangutans produce solitary lifestyles. Gorillas maintain large group size by relying on highly available, lower quality foods. Chimpanzees forage in small subgroups separate from their overall social group, allowing large group size while retaining general food quality. Further behavioral adaptations as relating to these group sizes related to mating, predator defense, and social organization are explored in detail.

Introduction:

The ecological constraints model indicates that as group size increases, in-group competition for food resources should increase. As such foraging ranges must increase for the group which should have a maximizing effect on group size, as of course a group can only spend a limited amount of energy traveling in search of food. Essentially, as group size increases range of movement during a day must also increase (Gillespie and Chapman, 2001). Large group size offers several advantages. Those in large groups can outcompete conspecifics in smaller groups for food sources (Garber, 1988). Large group size can help serve as a predator deterrent (Chapman and Chapman, 1996). In this instance it is important to note that all of the hominids are of medium-to-large body size (all very large for primates), which also serves as an antipredator adaptation (Vermeij, 1994). In general, the advantages of large group size are seen to match

or outweigh its disadvantages (Majolo et al., 2008). I will focus on the interaction between group size and food requirements in the three genera of non-human hominids. I will also be interested in other adaptations which can take the place of group size, as well as other adaptations related to the advantages and disadvantages associated with the group size of the animals discussed.

The advantages and disadvantages (beyond ecological resource factors) of the group size of the species in question will also be discussed, as will the features of the animal which might help mitigate these disadvantages. I will try to answer these questions: what group size do these animals exhibit? How might resources in the environment constrain these group sizes? What are the secondary advantages to these group sizes (those not related to the limiting resource)? What are the disadvantages to these group sizes? How does the group (or how does it not) compensate for these disadvantages?

Various behaviors can fulfill the same need in an animal. There is thereby a relationship between certain behaviors by which an increase in the predominance of one is often associated with a decrease in the predominance of another. This makes sense, because if you are already effectively fulfilling a need with one strategy it is poor function to expend additional resources attempting to fulfill that same need with an additional, unnecessary stratagem. This is of course a tendency, rather than a strict relationship. Predator pressure may be so high as to necessitate many predator defenses, for example. Or the cost of a particular adaptation may be low enough that its marginal returns are worth it. These needs and the behaviors and structures used to fulfill them will of course vary with environment. For example, as there are no native terrestrial predators to

New Zealand, much of the fauna there has little to no capability to reduce predation on themselves by these groups. As a result, with the introduction of terrestrial predators by Polynesian and European settlers, many of these species died out. Given that certain evolutionary pressures are put on the species discussed here, they will have various strategies to deal with those, which will have a relationship to the other strategies which also deal with the same evolutionary pressures. As such the nature of these adaptations (in this sense, what they are an adaptation for or in response to) and the relationship between other, related adaptations will be an important factor in this piece.

an anti-predator behavior pattern (van Schaik, 1983). Orangutans do possess other features which may mitigate the loss of predator defense granted by large group sizes. For one, orangutans are rather large-bodied animals which limits predation in a rather obvious way: only animals of a similar or larger size are capable of preying on them. As such, only tigers and leopards commonly predate orangutans. Orangutans face predation on the ground in Sumatra, in the form of tigers, and as such very rarely use terrestrial modes of locomotion there (Sugardjito, 1983). In this sense arboreality is a powerful antipredator behavior in this group. Even arboreally, cloud leopards still threaten orangutans, especially infants. In response to this nocturnal predator, females

	Group type	Group size	Diet	Size (pooled sex)
<i>Pongo</i>	Solitary	1	Frugivorous	53kg
<i>Gorilla</i>	Single-male/multi-female	6 to 11	Folivorous ¹	126.5kg
<i>Pan</i>	Multi-male/multi-female	28 to 60	Frugivorous, secondarily omnivorous	39kg

Table 1 Overview details of groups discussed (Lehmann et al., 2007).

Orangutans: Diurnal/solitary?

Orangutans are essentially extreme examples of the ecological constraint model. Group behavior is so costly to them that it is essentially nonexistent outside of mother-offspring associations. They are large-bodied animals requiring large amounts of particular food. They show very strong preferences for fruit and have a tendency to clear out any patch they forage in (Galdikas, 1988), despite picking foraging patches largely based off of the quantity of available food in that patch (Leighton, 1993). Even though orangutans are classified as solitary animals it seems likely that they are only dependently so, based off of available food resources. They can be found congregating in overabundant feeding sites where animals gather in very large numbers (Sugardjito et al., 1987) and in zoos large groups are kept together and tolerate one another well.

Diurnal primates are very often gregarious and it can be understood that increased group size acts as

with infants build nests away from obvious spots such as fruiting trees, thereby minimizing the risk to infants from this predator (Sugardjito, 1983).

Large groups can also be used in intraspecific competition for preferred foraging grounds, especially in frugivores where food occurs in localized high densities but is often widely dispersed (Wrangham, 1980). But due to the great scarcity of preferred foods, this form of association is not advantageous to orangutans (Galdikas, 1988). In the few associations between juveniles and adults, it was adult males and reproducing females who did more poorly, while the juveniles did as well as when alone (Mitani, 1989). The adult members spent either more time traveling and less time eating, or more time traveling and less time resting, while subadult behavior patterns remained the same. These observations are well in line with this being an extreme example of the ecological constraint model. A further disadvantage to high dispersal in the species is access to mates. Males will wish to (if possible) have

exclusive access to mates. Obviously if a male is rarely around females (and other males for that matter) he will be unable to do so by the more obvious method of simply keeping other males away from females. There is significant overlap in male ranges (Galdikas, 1985) and male ranges are not necessarily consistent. Some are "resident" of a particular area while some are "wanderers" who make use of a particular (overlapping) area for a limited period before moving on to another (te Boekhorst et al., 1990). However, being a resident of an area is not necessarily synonymous to being dominant within it, sometimes wandering males are dominant over resident males within their resident ranges (Mitrasetia and Utami, 1994). Further, a resident male does not necessarily maintain residency indefinitely, as he is sometimes displaced by other males (Mitrasetia and Utami, 1994). And Galdikas (1985) could not claim any particular reason her observed resident left the study area for two years.

There is significant competition among males, resulting in avoidance in some time periods (Rijksen, 1978) and adult males having the highest rate of disfiguring injuries (Galdikas, 1985). Males come in two distinct morphs, "flanged" and "unflanged" (Uchida, 1994). While unflanged males are capable of reproduction, females show a preference for flanged males (Schurmann and van Hooff, 1986). And only flanged males produce "long calls" (Mitani, 1985), which receptive females are attracted to (Schurmann and van Hooff, 1986). Flanged males also always displace unflanged males in mating (Schurmann, 1982). It has long been proposed that the presence of fully adult, flanged males is responsible for unflanged males remaining in that state for an extended period (Kingsley, 1982). In this way, even though males do not directly defend their territories (as seen by the significant overlap) they may indirectly increase their likelihood to mate with females by reducing the likelihood of other males mating in their areas.

Gorillas: A folivore paradox

Gorillas show a second form of adaptations to the ecological constraint of food resources. While orangutans use small group size (solitary) to maximize

available food per individual, gorillas instead make use of incredibly abundant food sources (Watts, 1984). As such, they are able to form large groups of animals even larger-bodied than orangutans. Gorillas generally consume herbaceous terrestrial vegetation which is available in enormous quantities in their chosen habitat (Watts, 1984). But while the regular distribution of similar-quality food allows large groups, it also eliminates one of the advantages of group living: defense of food territory. There is little reason to defend a food resource that is readily available in similar quantities throughout a range (Watts, 1990).

It is sometimes thought that as a result of this, that the ecological constraint factor has little to do with group size in folivorous primates (Steenbeek and van Schaik, 1999). This thought bears two considerations. The first is that simply because a system has adapted in such a way that it is no longer under a particular pressure does not mean that that pressure is not relevant to that system. It could be precisely the opposite; that the pressure was so strong that the system (in this case gorillas) had to evolve such adaptations as to completely avoid that pressure, which is of course a response to the pressure itself. The same logic is seen in competition ecology; the lack of competition between two species that overlap does not mean that competition is irrelevant to those species, it may be the case that competition was so important to them and so restrictive that they evolved to avoid it (Roughgarden, 1983).

It may also be the case that the ecological constraint model is in fact very important in gorilla group sizes. A number of studies in various species are of the opinion that, available food resources are still an important limiting factor on the group sizes of a number of folivorous primates, gorillas included (Snaith and Chapman, 2007). Ganas and Robbins found that group day range was positively associated with group size (2005), and that increases in frugivory were associated with increases in day range in upper elevations, but the opposite phenomenon was observed in lower altitudes, where fruit is more common. This is consistent with the theory behind the ecological constraint model.

As groups in size larger than solitary are completely excluded by ecological concerns in Pongo, there is no "room" for sociological effects to take hold.

But as there is variability in gorilla group size (which itself varies with ecological effects), there are also other relevant characteristics to take into account. In gorillas, the single male of a group maintains strong ties with each female in the group, which have only weak bonds with non-related females in the group (Harcourt and Stewart, 2007). Thereby the male forms the nucleus of a group. They exist as a group only insofar as a number of females associate strongly with the same male. If a male is unable to maintain the affiliative relationship with all of his females, perhaps because there are too many of them (Sueur et al., 2011), or he spends too little time grooming them (Lehmann et al., 2007), his group may dwindle. In general, the larger a group is the more likely it is to lose members, and vice-versa (Stokes et al., 2003). However, despite their observed folivory, given the option, gorillas will preferentially consume fruit (Remis, 2001). Though all three genera preferentially consume fruit, all respond to this preference differently. It seems that gorillas' main reaction is to essentially "give up" on consuming fruit and to fall back on less-preferred but more easily acquired foliage foods the vast majority of the time. This varies by species, with lowland gorillas more likely to consume leaves and mountain gorillas more likely to consume THV (terrestrial herbaceous vegetation), but the situation is the same (Harrison and Marshall, 2011). Gorillas consume almost exclusively their non-favored food because of the scarcity of their favored foods, though when it is available they will increase foraging time significantly in order to consume fruit over foliage (Masi et al., 2009).

Despite their large size and arboreal capabilities, nesting behaviors in lowland gorillas indicate that they are at significant risk from predators (Yamagiwa, 2002). Immature and female gorillas rarely make their nests terrestrially (most nests are arboreal), but do so even more rarely if they are not part of a group including an adult male. When a new male immigrated into the group in Yamagiwa's study (which previously lacked a male), terrestrial nesting drastically increased. However, mountain gorillas have very few (essentially no) predators (Robbins et al., 2009). Therefore group defense is unlikely to be a significant advantage of group sizes. It is true that group sizes tend to be decreased in mountain gorillas compared to lowland varieties

(Lehmann et al., 2007), but Yamagiwa (2002) found that group size was not important in determining the rate at which nests were built arboreally, therefore indicating that overall group size is not important to predator deterrence, but merely the presence of an adult male.

Of course, given that all females prefer to be in a group with a male, all males will prefer to be in groups with as many females as possible. It is possible that time is an important variable in group size. Pollard and Blumstein (2008) found that group size was positively correlated with time spent resting in a sample of diurnal primates. Further, there is likely to be female preference for a high-quality male as long as she is sufficiently likely to mate with him, which would favor a non-zero group size, but not an enormous one (in line with observed sizes). While sex ratios at birth are equal (Watts, 1991) and survival to adulthood is similar (Robbins, 1995) subadult males are not necessarily capable of sufficient anti-predator behavior (Robbins, 1995). There will, however, be an equal number of subadult females still dispersing and interested in male protection, who must of course go outside of their age group. High-quality males are also more capable of deterring predators (van Schaik and van Hoof, 1983), even more exaggerating the size of groups. It may be case that females favor males capable of sequestering a large number of females, the idea being that her offspring will also be more capable of doing the same (the "sexy son" hypothesis, Weatherhead and Robertson, 1979).

Chimpanzees: Nuclear Families

Chimpanzees prefer to consume fruit, just like the other two groups discussed (Remis, 2001). They also consume these preferential food items much more often than gorillas, though less often than orangutans even though it is similarly difficult to acquire (Harrison and Marshall, 2011). Further, they are of a similar size to female orangutans. Despite all of this, they manage to form and maintain larger groups than gorillas and much larger groups than orangutans. While orangutans minimize group size to maximize food quality, and gorillas maximize food availability to attain large groups, chimpanzees seem to have an interest in both worlds. Chimpanzees exhibit a type of social organization

referred to as "fission-fusion" in which large social groups regularly break up into smaller groups of varying composition when foraging (Nishida, 1968).

Isbell and Young (1996) understood that a fission-fusion social arrangement was in response to this ecological restriction on group sizes. By associating in only small groups while foraging and large groups while engaging in other activities, chimpanzees effectively reduce their group sizes to those of their foraging parties. At least insofar as food resource restraints are concerned. Thereby they can maintain very large groups while keeping day range relatively short (Lehmann et al., 2007a). Large groups have increased in-group food competition, increased predator defense, and increased capability for inter-group food competition, as well as suffering slight reproductive rate reductions (Majolo et al., 2008). Which is not to say that chimpanzee groups are not limited by food resources. Overall group size (Potts et al., 2011) and foraging time for all subgroups (Yamagiwa, 1999) still vary based on available food resources.

By maintaining large groups, chimpanzees are able to sequester superior foraging areas to themselves from inter-group competition. Obviously if a larger group of a species and a smaller group of the same species compete for the same feeding area the larger group will in general win and preclude the other. Chimpanzees exhibit very extensive border defense despite metabolic and time costs associated with those behaviors (Amsler, 2010). These defenses can be lethal (Watts et al., 2006) and so present a significant cost to individuals engaged in them. Border defense behaviors are exhibited by males (Williams et al., 2004) to defend food territories. They always attack neighboring males when they encounter them, and are likely to attack non-group females especially those that are particularly old, not sexually reproductive, or already have a number of young. Sometimes these interactions result in mating (Boesch et al., 2008), and sometimes females can peacefully pass through territories, especially those with infants.

This variety of subdivision also grants far more flexibility to subgroup size (foraging groups) than others would. If a gorilla group loses a member, regaining that member is an extended and not sure prospect.

Subgroup size is significantly restricted by available food (Lehmann and Boesch, 2004) and varies with season (Itoh and Nishida, 2007). In seasons of plenty, subgroups more closely approach overall group size. Patch size selection varies with subgroup size. When a subgroup is larger, it will seek larger patch sizes, but this in turn means that the subgroup must spend longer periods searching and less time feeding and resting (Asensio et al., 2009).

Even within the shared-group territory and within the context of "small" group size via fission, there is still marked intragroup competition for food resources. Dominant females retain access to core areas of a territory with the highest food quality (Kahlenberg et al., 2008). They exhibit limited direct competition with females, but do display some interference competition. Just the presence of a high-ranked female will displace lower ranking ones, however. As a result dominant females consume a much narrower range of consistently high-quality food (Murray et al., 2006). Generally females have somewhat consistent ranges at least in terms of quality, and when new members join there are the greatest rates of female-female aggression as new members determine their place in the hierarchy via food competition (Kahlenberg et al., 2008). Within their territories, females prefer smaller subgroup sizes (Chapman et al., 1995) and avoid large bisexual subgroups (Mulavwa et al., 2008) for the same reasons that favor small group sizes outside of a fission-fusion system. Males however, prefer to be in subgroups with females, especially fertile and sexually receptive ones. As all males prefer to associate with the same type of female, these subgroups tend to be large. All male and all female subgroups do not change size significantly as seasons and resource availability change (Matsumoto-Oda, 1998). Bisexual subgroups, however, vary significantly. Male pressures towards associations with females push those subgroups to ecological maximums, while other groups are not maximized.

Larger subgroups increase the amount of time group members associate with one another. As such, those groups which are smaller (and thereby can include a larger proportion of the group in subgroups) are more cohesive than those that are larger (Lehmann and Boesch, 2004). It is thought that the differential

aggression rates between *Paniscus* and *Troglodytes* can be explained via this phenomenon. Bonobos live in higher quality food areas, and often have subgroups making up larger proportions of the overall group (Mulavwa et al., 2008). Common chimpanzees must often forage alone or with only their offspring (Chapman et al., 1995) and as such have fewer associations with one another than bonobos who are rarely solitary even within territory (Wrangham et al., 1996).

Because groups are based off of a cohesive group of males (Gilby and Wrangham, 2008), rather than a single one, they are not restricted in the manner gorillas are (see above). A larger male group size allows expanded associations with females, mitigating some of the sociological restrictions on group size. As a result of the fission-fusion system, subdominant males are more able to mate with females. When groups fission off, dominant males can no longer keep other males away from females and as a result they often mate. This allows increased male size of groups. Of course if no males ever had a chance to mate because they were always in association with dominant males, they would not remain part of the group for long. While it is true that dominant males are more often the fathers of infants in a group, subdominant males mate and father at a much greater rate than would be expected (Wroblewski et al., 2009). As a result, physical domination is a less powerful selective factor in mating. This, coupled with coalition-based dominance strategies (Foster et al., 2009) may reduce the amount of sexual dimorphism found in chimpanzees as compared to the other apes (Terborgh and Janson, 1986). Which in turn increases the importance of non-access restrictive sperm competition strategies (Terborgh and Janson, 1986).

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How to Omen

By Stephen Morton
slm04@hampshire.edu

So here's the deal. I love the Omen. You love the Omen. It's one big Omen love party! But a lot of the time, the omen is not so good at maintaining best practices, as it were. We forget things easy. The purpose of this document is to tell you, Omen kids of the future, what we've done and how you can keep doing it, in case direct transmission of the knowledge is not maintained that well which, let's face it, it won't be. We'll start basic and work our way up to the esoteric.

===The Omen: A Brief Synopsis===

The basics, just for posterity's sake: The Omen is Hampshire College's oldest publication, founded by Stephanie Cole in 1994. We print all submissions that are from members of the Hampshire Community, have their author's names attached and are not libelous. In practice, we do not check for libel. Eight and a half by eleven inch booklet (printed on 11x17 paper and then collated, folded and stapled), greyscale, some number of pages divisible by four. Try for 16, 20, 24, 28, or 32, generally speaking. At time of writing a production run of the Omen is 350 copies, although this has varied and will vary again. Printed biweekly, so Omen activities alternate layout and distribution. Duplications account number 672. Layout usually done in Adobe InDesign, although exceptions are known to happen. Currently sent to duplications as a pdf via email, but this may not always be the case. The Omen loves you, each and every one.

===Content===

Things in every issue: Cover, Back Cover, Editorial, Table of Contents, Staff Box. Sometimes a quote. Policy statement, submission statement, Omen Haiku. Whoever is running the Omen show is responsible for producing/including these things. You

can produce other official omen content if you like, which does not have to be attributed to anyone other than "Omen Staff" or whatever.

The staff box is a list of everyone who attended layout that week, along with made up titles for them. These can be anything. Traditionally, the editor just made shit up that made them laugh. In recent years, David Axel Kurtz convinced everyone that there's supposed to be a question that is asked of everyone, and their answer is what goes in the staff box. I think that is stupid and so is David's face. I am the sole holdout on this matter. No one else agrees with me, but I'm the one writing this guide so I get to put whatever I want in it, haha, suckers.

The Omen quote, if included, goes under the staff box and is usually something stupid that somebody said recently. Generally attributed, and maybe a bit of context like a subject matter given. Can be stray bits of dialogue. Sometimes illustrated with pictures of funny looking people from the internet, and word balloons.

Cover and Back cover either make up or convince someone to make for you. Table of content is what it sounds like. Policy and submission statement should be already written for you, update as needed. Omen Haiku needs no tinkering with, except presentationally. Editorial should minimum fill up whatever's left over of the third page of the issue, counting the cover as page 1. Generally written by the official omen editor, or whoever actually did layout, and sometimes just by whoever's at layout that can be conned into it. Whatever.

Other than that, everything else is a submission. It needs a title and an author/submitter, plus whatever it is. In the early days of the Omen, it didn't need a title: we made one up, often making fun of the article it titled. We don't do that any more. Currently the Omen editorial voice is confined to the actual editorial, except for special cases where we are making fun of the stupid shit a friend of ours has submitted. This is okay. If you're not on those sorts of terms with the author, it's best to confine your

comments on people's submissions to a submission of your own. We print submissions of all lengths, although particularly long submissions may be serialized over several issues, if appropriate. Otherwise, shrink the font size to barely readable and call it good enough.

Submissions are generally divided up into sections. The traditional sections are Speak, Hate, Lies, and Sweet. Sweet has not been used in many years. Speak is for anything that smells like an opinion, Lies is for anything fiction, and hate is for anything that smells angry or is just funny to put under a banner of "Section Hate". At one time, sections actually had section editors who would layout their individual section and pass the results to the head editor. This hasn't happened in years, we are not that organized. Sometimes the sections have had special graphics announcing themselves in goofy ways. You can also make up new sections as you see fit. This usually happens right now if a particular author or group of authors submits more than anyone is realistically going to read (Rule number one of the Omen: No one reads the Omen), we make a section just to group all that together, so that the savvy reader knows what to avoid. Or something like that!

===Staff Content===

Staff content can take many forms. Here's some shit we've done in the past.

Famous Febs: This goes in the first issue of the spring semester. Pick some random famous people, put some facts you might or might not have made up about them under their picture and then claim that they were a Feb. Easy!

The Omen Course Catalog: Once a semester, whenever the actual course catalog comes out. Make up some classes from various schools, in a humorous fashion. Generally makes fun of one school or another, specific professors, or stereotypical students from one school or another ("Science for [non-NS school] Students" is generally a productive listing for an NS class), etc.

The Control Panel: This is for whenever there's something worth talking about on campus. Get approximately four people in a room with an audio recorder and get them on record talking about whatever it is. Transcribe their conversation, note the important characteristics of the participants, and run it as content in the Omen. I have heard that this has also involved plying the participants with booze in the past.

The Omen Activity Pages: Whenever you feel like it. Make up some stupid crossword puzzles or connect the dots or something of that nature. This can be an insert in the middle of the omen that isn't actually stapled in. One year we did that in time for Hampshire Halloween and passed issues out to people waiting in line for midnight breakfast at saga. Drunk people like this feature.

Article Goblins: Shitty MS-Paint goblins made of lines and polygons to fill dead space.

There's probably some other nonsense I'm forgetting. Be creative!

===Special Issues===

There's a couple special issues that the Omen produces. You should do them too!

The Valentines day issue is the most popular and most important of the special Omen issues. If you're only going to manage one special issue, make it this one. Put some little squares of paper in everyone's mailboxes at the start of February, inviting them to write or draw a valentine note on it and then put it into a box that is left in the mail room. These can be and usually are anonymous. Put little designs on the squares of paper given to people. Collect them all, scan them all in, and print in time for Valentines Day. This usually ends up being the second issue of the spring semester. Some of the submissions you get are actually pretty good!

Next up is the Nemo. The Nemo was originally an extended April Fool's gag by the omen staff, pretending to be a genuine new publication on campus, hating the Omen. In subsequent issues it

was revealed that the Nemo was in fact written by the Omen staff, and featured dismayed articles from the Nemo staff, upset to learn that they did not, in fact, exist, and were actually Omen kids, their sworn enemy. Nemo is, of course, Omen backwards. Subsequently, it's been run as a single issue of April Fool's nonsense. Get it out on April 1st if you can, fill it with a bunch of blatant lies that make you laugh, generally about Hampshire and the people in it. Printed, it should look vaguely like whatever the Climax looks like these days. If the Climax has died (again), whatever the most likely target is for the Omen's rival publication. If none available, probably just stick to a broadsheet newspaper-style, but if you've got something funnier go with it.

Div III/Commencement issue: Make an issue comprised entirely of content by graduating students and distribute it at commencement. Confuse the parents. This is a personal favorite of mine, because I made it up.

Guy Fawkes Day: This is just like Valentines day except instead of asking who your valentine is we ask who you'd like to burn in effigy. I think we only did this once, really, and it resulted in a lot of vulgar drawings of the then-editor but it's still a funny idea.

===Layout and Distribution===

Layout is when a bunch of people get together in the Omen office and hang out while someone actually does the work of laying out the goddamn issue. Often there is food. In the past, layout was also an opportunity to proof read all the submissions: we'd print out a copy of everything and pass the pages around the room, correcting spelling mistakes, obvious typos, and grammar errors. Sometimes people specifically requested that we not do this, which we respected. This has not happened in years, the Omen is not that organized anymore. The hanging out, however, does serve an important purpose, in that it allows the editor to not become terminally bored while doing the work of actually laying out the issue. Side note: the Omen office is improved by your efforts to steal or donate whatever furniture, appliances, useful

objects, useless objects, flotsam or jetsam you deem appropriate. Make it yours.

Distribution is when we actually get the thing out into the world. Hold back about 10 copies of every issue for the Omen's archives, and give two copies to whoever's at the library's front desk and tell them it's for the archives. As for the rest, the most important distribution place is the mail room, everyone goes here. The second most important is Saga. We used to actually go into saga and put a copy on all the tables, but saga got mad at us for that because they'd mostly end up all over the floor and they'd have to clean it up. So now they just go by the door or under the whiteboard. After that, if you still feel like it, get creative. Put copies on the tables in the Library Lounge, the Bridge Cafe. Put some around FPH, Cole Science, the writing center, wherever else it is that students are likely to go.

If you're reading this in a time when the Omen is particularly organized and ambitious, you can do Mod distribution. This is a decent amount of work, and probably requires a group of different people willing to distribute independently of each other. Go around and tape a copy of the Omen to the door of every Mod, or put it in front of their door, or whatever. Another idea that has been floated occasionally is to let Mods sign up for Omen delivery, and then just deliver to those Mods, in order to cut down on the work involved.

===Technical Esoterica===

The Omen has, at the time of writing, a pretty good digital archive. This has only happened because of a few years of some particularly technically inclined people who got into the omen and made it that way. We'd really appreciate it if you continued to maintain this. To that end:

Dropbox is a nice bit of software that creates a folder on your computer that is always backed up. At time of writing, this is installed on both of the computers in the Omen office, as well as the Omen's server. Any important files should be saved in the dropbox folder. This means that copies of them will

be present on all three machines, plus a backup on the internet, preventing any loss of shit. In particular, you should make a folder within the dropbox folder for the issue you're laying out. It should contain at a minimum the indesign file you're working on, a folder containing a copy of all of the submissions sent to you in their original form, and a pdf file of the finished issue, once completed. PDFs can be created using the print to PDF feature available in all OS X programs that you can print from.

You should also put copies of any posters, flyers, mailbox inserts, or any other omen related content in dropbox. Copies of both the source version (i.e. word doc, indesign, whatever) and the print version (i.e. pdf) (where applicable) are nice to have, but any is better than none. The archives, print and digital, are mostly lacking as far as this sort of content goes. A lot of it gets produced on random people's computers and never put on the office computer, which means it never makes it to the archives, and nobody ever thinks to hold some copies back for the print archives. Save this material! It's omen content too!

Next, the actual archives themselves. Dealing with these pretty much requires you to be somewhat comfortable working with a UNIX command line. If there are no Omen kids who can be described as such, recruit one, learn it yourself (not actually that hard, depending on your skill set). Failing that, contact an Omen alum known to possess such skills. If I end up doing this for the next 10 years because no one else can manage it, I will be annoyed with all of you. Just saying.

In the spring of 2011, the omen applied for and was granted a virtual private server on Pitus, the machine that hosts Hampedia. If nobody can be found anymore who knows what the hell that means, contact Josiah Erikson, who is almost certainly still working at Hampshire, and he will probably know what the current situation is. This server can be found at omen.hampshire.edu and serves a number of functions for us. It hosts our website, stores an archive of the Omen's email, has a copy of the current Dropbox contents, and stores the digital archives.

At the end of the year someone should go through the dropbox folder and put each issue's folder into a .tar file. Also create tar files of the set of posters etc. for each semester. Take any other material that has accumulated on the omen's two computers over the past year, and collect it into a tar file labeled with the year and "miscellaneous" or something similar. Compress all tar files with xz, and copy them to omen.hampshire.edu. The archives should be in /srv/omen-archive. The archives can then be synced back down to the two office computers with rsync or something, but the server copy should be the master version. The office computers, aside from their local copies of the archives, should be left with just whatever's going to be used in the next year's omen: reusable omen images, template indd files, etc. Everything else should ONLY exist in the archives. It is confusing to manage the archives if some content exists in both places and some content is only in the archive. Don't do that.

The email archive takes care of itself, and should need little supervision. it makes sure that all email sent to and from omen@hampshire.edu is backed up and archived for posterity, even if deleted from the account. I have set it up this way because I don't trust you people to not delete emails from the account. I still wouldn't recommend that you do so, but at least this way, when you do, a copy will still exist somewhere. It'll be a real pain to get at if ever desired, but it'll be there. Whenever the password for the email account is changed, the password in /home/omen/.offlineimaprc needs to be updated. If you want further technical details, contact me.

The website is under /srv/www and can be whatever you want it to be. Where possible, don't change URLs - link rot is bad. Whatever you do, you should probably keep the Div III generator since it's been on pretty much every version of the site. You really shouldn't move the contents of omen.hampshire.edu/issues/ in particular; that's where PDFs of every issue are, and they should stay there.

The omen has two mailing lists: omen@lists.hampshire.edu and omen-issues@lists.hampshire.edu. 'omen' is the main one, its webpage is <https://lists.hampshire.edu/mailman/listinfo/omen>. Mostly it

consists of announcements of meeting times, and other organizational details. Omen-issues has a webpage at <<https://lists.hampshire.edu/mailman/listinfo/omen-issues>>. Every time a new issue comes out, put the pdf of it on the website under /issues/ and then omen@hampshire.edu should send an email to this list announcing the new issue and linking to the pdf on the website. In this way, everyone who wants to read the omen can do so. Promote this list to alums especially.

We need to scan in the existing paper archives, there's a lot of issues that we have no digital copy for.

For archival purposes, scan to 600ppi tiff files. The EXIF data should include what scanner was used (Exif.Image.Make, Exif.Image.Model) and time of creation (Exif.Image.DateTimeOriginal). Downsample the tiff files and put them in a pdf for general consumption, archive the high resolution copies.

===Other===

Every five years there should be an omen anniversary party. It is traditional to have a pig roast, last time we had it supplied by Outlook Farms. Their bumper sticker is on the white board in the omen office. Get in touch with whatever omen alums you have contact information for, the information should spread from there. Twentieth anniversary should be in spring 2013.

Make it happen.



THEY'RE TAKING THE HOBBITS TO I S E N GARD

Win-A-Date

-with-

David "Daxel" Kurtz

Submit to the next issue of your favorite free speech publication, and you could win a date with the King of Omen, David Axel Kurtz!

Send a poem, painting, drawing, cartoon, essay, letter, or results of your STI test to Omen@Hampshire.edu by 4/26/12 to win a date with David!



Last contest's winner enjoying his prize.

Win-A-Date with Daxel Contest Terms and Conditions

F. Stewart-Taylor

The Omen Staff reserves the rights to award one, many, several or no dates with David Axel Kurtz to any contest participants. David Axel Kurtz has not been consulted in relation to this contest, and his image, as well as that of Zachary "Happy Couple" Clemente, is used without permission.

A valid submission for this contest consists of any material, submitted either in person to the Omen office or in a signer's box or digitally to Omen@hampshire.edu. Submissions must not be anonymous, and must not be libelous, but you knew that already, champ. Any subject is fair game, up to and including erotic David Axel Kurtz/Zachary Clemente fanfiction, as long as said fanfiction is non-libelous. David's been accepted to law school, he knows what's what.

The Omen staff and staffers reserve the right to empanel any judges they deem correct for the purpose of this contest, up to and including The Daxel himself, and the judges' decision is ultimately final, although we do encourage you to write angry emails contesting our choices. We will publish them.

The Omen makes no assurances as to the quality of David as a date, your particular romantic compatibility with David, or even the palatability of his company for an entire evening. We further make no promises about the quality of his forthcoming or prior novels. We will not fund your date, nor do we assure you that Daxel will. He's probably a cheap date, though.



Defending Bad Movies #1: Van Helsing by Ryan Meiselman

As I watched the monster-filled action-packed epic Van Helsing, a friend commented as such: "This movie is awful, but in a good way." To that, I responded: "Fuck no, this is awesome, in an awful way." It really works either way you look at it. He saw the shitty writing and dreadfully cliché story, but I saw the good parts of it.

First of all, Hugh Jackman is a fucking chief in this movie. Motherfucker has like a million guns that are all crazy and steampunk and shit, like his goddamn automatic crossbow. That shit was legit. Secondly, Kate Beckinsale is hot as helllllll, yo. I'd watch her in anything and be satisfied, like Click. That movie sucked, but it had Kate Beckinsale, so it was kinda alright. Thirdly, there were some badass action scenes. Like that masquerade ball scene? That shit made me squeal in girlish delight. There were some crazy-ass fight scenes, too.

Anywhom, I love Van Helsing. I've seen it several times, and it never gets old for me.



Not Having a Laptop Sucks a Lot

Jonathan Gardner

So just over a week ago, the unthinkable happened. My laptop, which has served me well for almost the entire school year, broke down, and is now in critical condition over at diagnostics. I'm not sure when or if I'll get it back, so as you can imagine, the past week has been filled for me with anxiety and irrational anger at the world.

And it's just been a massive pain in the ass. Since it broke down, I've had to resort to going to the library all the time to do my work. And don't get me wrong, I like going to the library sometimes, but you get sick of it after a while. Really sick. But what's interesting about the library is that after you've consistently been there for a few days, you start to notice that you see the same people in there all the time. I've started to give some of them nicknames in my head. There's "Mega Ultra King Hipster XIV of the Hipster Dynasty", and "Guy Who Lost His Pants That One Time" (it's a long story), and "That One Girl Who I Creepily Admire From Afar", among many others. It's like there's this whole ecosystem of library-dwellers that I've become a part of now.

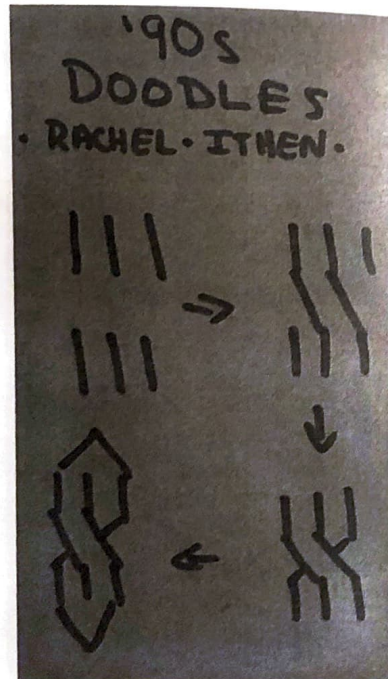
Get me out of here.

Anyway.

I really hope that I get my laptop back soon, because my quality of life has severely diminished without it. I've been forced to resort to actually being social with people, for example, which is a huge damn problem. And in my boredom, I've also started doing my readings for classes. I NEVER do readings for classes; at most I'll skim them, but without my laptop at my disposal, what the hell else am I supposed to

do? And the worst part is how productive I've been otherwise; I've applied for two jobs, and I started writing a paper that won't be due for almost a month. Do you realize how weird that is? Ordinarily I write papers the morning that they're due.

I just really, really want my laptop back. It's the only one who understands me. ☹️



Section: Lies



Tess McKechnie and Kiera Wilson



Section: Hate

Live Every Week Like It's Shark Week Breton K Handy

On April 1, 2012, an email was sent from Housing Operations to every student at Hampshire detailing the new identity based housing on campus. While many of these new housing options were frivolous and unnecessary, this email addressed a growing problem at Hampshire College and attempted to provide an answer to the question that's been on the tip of everyone's tongue for the past several years: When is the Hampshire College Administration going to grant identity based housing to sharks? The letter introduced the concept of a "Shark Mod", which would provide a safe and inclusive community space for sharks on campus. However, to the dismay of many sharks at Hampshire this letter turned out to be an April Fools' prank. Further attempts to contact the Housing Office in regards to Shark Mod have been futile.

That being said, in recent weeks there has been much unrest among the shark population at Hampshire College. I can only suspect that by the end of the year the campus will look like a scene from Jaws 2, and for good reason. Over the years, sharks have faced numerous injustices at the hands of the media, your local harbormaster, Adam West, and now, Housing Operations. Statistically speaking, more people die each year in vending machine accidents than from sharks. Yet, for some reason, we're still peddling bottled water in vending machines even though it costs much more than tap water and is also much worse for the environment. It's a ruthless battle between massive corporations and the human spirit, and whoever wins, the sharks lose.

Of course, like all social justice movements, the liberation of the sharks is not without criticism. One student brought up the point that if a mod for Sharks was actually going to be a reality, then a similar mod for Jets would also have to be erected, because clearly West Side is best side. I told him to pick up a copy of Derailing for Dummies because he was obviously speaking from a point of Jet privilege. Also, judging by the amount of people who took offense to the original email, I'm going to guess that there are quite a few people on campus who just don't like sharks.

This is a call to arms, fins, what have you. Together, we can end the discrimination and make this community safe for sharks of all kinds. Together, we can make Shark Mod a reality. 🦈



Long live the Omen